



# The Role of CDC in Promoting Safe Routes to School

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# Why SRTS?

- The rate of **overweight** among children has tripled.
- The incidence of **type 2 diabetes** has increased 10-fold
- The rate of **asthma** among young children has increased 160%
- **Pedestrian injury** is the second leading cause of unintentional injury related death among 8-14 year olds.

# MMWR

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### International Walk to School Week — October 3–7, 2005

October 3–7, 2005, has been designated International Walk to School Week. The week enables children, parents, teachers, and community leaders to be part of a global event celebrating the benefits of walking and the need to create communities that are safe for pedestrians. In 2004, approximately 3 million walkers in 36 countries observed the weeklong event by walking to school.

CDC supports International Walk to School Week and walking and bicycling to school year-round through Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. *Safe Walk-to-School* is a community-based SRTS program that encourages walking and bicycling to school. As part of the program, communities build partnerships with schools, police officers, public works agencies, public officials, businesses, and civic associations to create an environment that supports safe and active travel to school. The program was developed in response to low rates of walking, inadequate physical activity levels, and a 300% increase in the proportion of overweight children since the early 1970s.

In 2005, Congress passed a transportation bill that includes \$612 million in funds for SRTS programs to enhance safety for children walking or bicycling to school. State departments of transportation will administer the program, and communities will be able to use the funds to make infrastructure improvements near schools (e.g., removing road hazards, slowing traffic, building sidewalks, and creating walking trails) and enhance safety through enforcement and education programs.

*Safe Walk-to-School* information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/npd/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm>. Information on International Walk to School Week is available at <http://www.walkingtoandfromschool.org>. Information on SRTS is available at <http://www.safeschoolsinfo.org>.

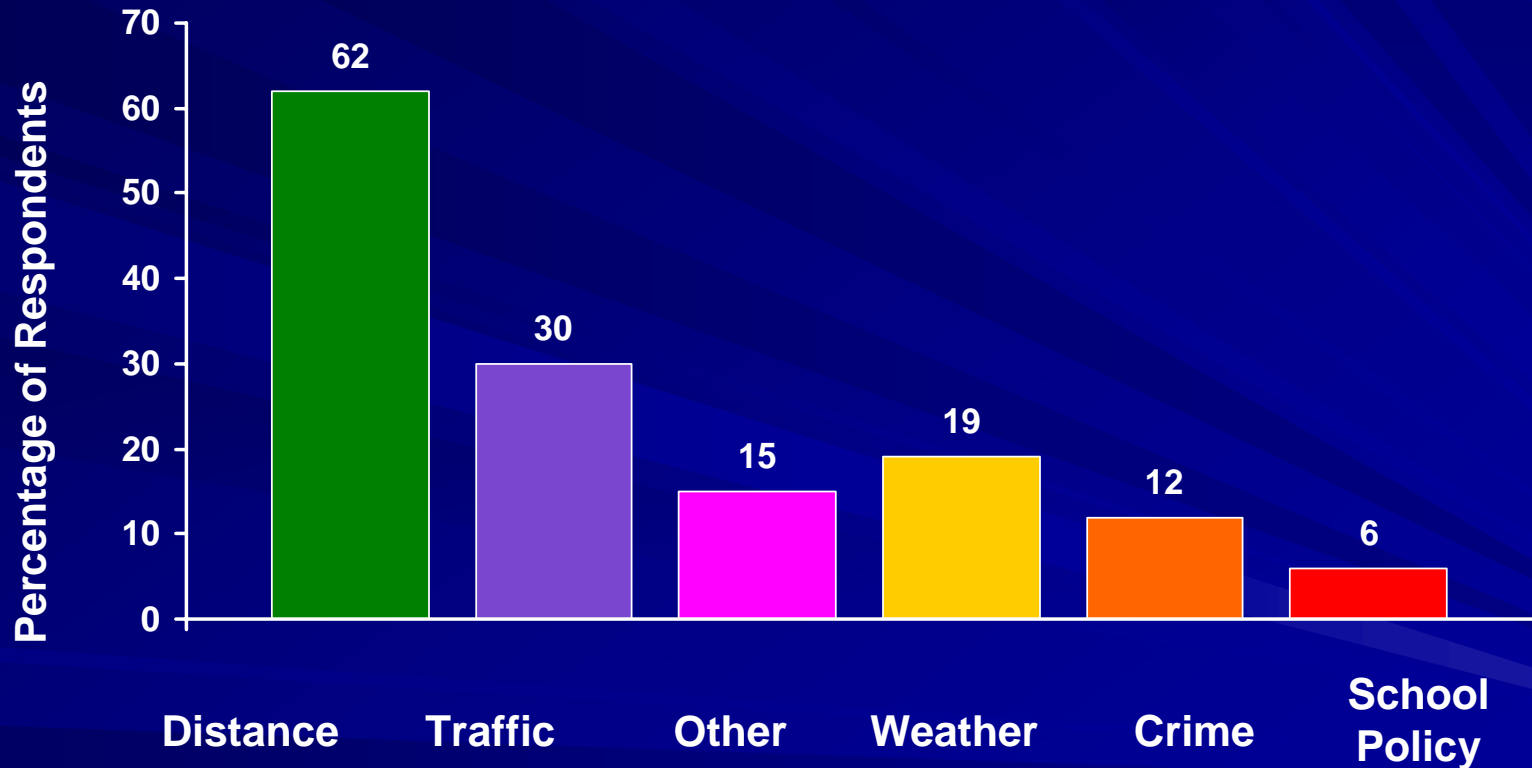
### Barriers to Children Walking to or from School — United States, 2004

Walking for transportation is part of an active lifestyle that is associated with decreased risks for heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and colon cancer and an increased sense of well-being (1). However, the percentage of trips made by walking has declined over time among both children (2) and adults (3). One of the objectives of *Healthy People 2010* (no. 22-14b) is to increase among children and adolescents the proportion of trips to school made by walking from 31% to 50% (4). In 1969, approximately half of all schoolchildren walked or bicycled to or from school, and 97% of those living within 1 mile of school walked or bicycled (5). Today, fewer than 15% of children and adolescents use active modes of transportation (2). This report examines data from the 2004 ConsumerStyles Survey and a follow-up recontact survey to describe what parents report as barriers to their children aged 5–18 years walking to or from school. Distance to school was the most commonly reported barrier, followed by traffic-related danger. Comprehensive initiatives that include behavioral, environmental, and policy strategies are needed to address these barriers to increase the percentage of children who walk to school.

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# Reported Barriers to Walking & Biking to School (2004)



Barriers to Children Walking to or from School – United States, 2004. MMWR 2005



# CDC's Contribution to SRTS

- CDC's Kids Walk-to-School  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm)
- Support for Safe Routes to School National Course [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)
- Steering Committee Member of IWALK
- Special Interest Project (SIP) for Policy Network investigating School Siting  
[www.slu.edu/colleges/sph/slusph/centers/prc/paprn.htm](http://www.slu.edu/colleges/sph/slusph/centers/prc/paprn.htm)
- SIP: National Evaluation of Walk to School

# Goals of KidsWalk-to-School

- Encourage children to walk and bicycle to and from school
- Improved pedestrian safety, and healthy and walkable community environments
- Increase awareness of the importance of regular physical activity for children
- Mobilize communities to work together to create safe routes to school



